

A Carl D. Perkins Gender  
Nontraditional Grant provided  
through the Nebraska Department  
of Education

# Southeast Community College Lincoln

## Making a Difference:

Equity through gender nontraditional education

# What is Gender Nontraditional?

A gender nontraditional field is defined as an occupation or field of work, including careers in computer science, technology, and other emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of individuals employed in an occupation or field of work.

## Nontraditional fields of study at SCC-Lincoln for women

- Automotive Technology
- Computer Aided Drafting & Design
- Electronic Servicing and Electronic Engineering Technology
- Fire Protection Technology
- Laboratory Science Technology
- Machine Tool Technology
- Microcomputer Technology
- Motorcycle, ATV & Personal Watercraft
- Nebraska Law Enforcement
- Truck Driver Training
- Visual Publication (Printing)
- Welding Technology

## For Men:

- Early Childhood Education
- Dental Assisting
- Medical Assisting
- Nursing
- Office Technology

# Why do we need Gender Nontraditional Education?



- Three out of four working women earn less than \$25,000 a year. (Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, Status Report, January 2003)
- Lancaster County households headed by single women are four times more likely than other Lancaster County households to fall below the poverty income level (22% compared to 5%). (Nebraska Census, 2000)
- In Nebraska, 80% of the workers in the 20 lowest paying job classifications are women. (Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, Status Report, January 2003)
- Poverty data also shows that women 65 or older are about half as likely as men to have a pension other than social security. (Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, Status Report, January 2003)
- Nebraska women's median annual income is 73.8% of men's median annual income. (Nebraska Census, 2000)

# Barriers to Gender Nontraditional Education

**Cultural bias** - Individual cultural backgrounds and society's expectations tend to promote traditional rather than nontraditional gender behavior, abilities, interests, and values in relation to work. Overcoming pervasive cultural bias requires equally strong academic, social, and personal commitment.

**Academic/career bias** – Unfortunately, school systems inadvertently perpetuate cultural bias. Women in particular are not encouraged to pursue typically “male” careers, such as science, research, and especially technology. To overcome this historical bias, students need well-trained faculty and advisors to provide awareness, encouragement, information, ongoing advising, and support. Retention is positively affected when students establish relationships and bonds within an institution. Students enrolled in gender nontraditional college programs sometimes need the structure provided by an identifiable support program.

**Lack of career exploration and knowledge** – Many students have not been presented with the opportunity to consider gender nontraditional career options, participate in assessment testing or study educational programs. Because of shrinking budgets, fewer high schools are offering vocational courses; therefore, students are not regularly exposed to a full range of career options. Special efforts are needed to overcome this hindrance and introduce gender nontraditional occupations and training to both high school and re-careering or age-nontraditional students.

**Financial barriers** – Financial concerns will often affect persistence, grade point average, and completion outcomes. Women are especially vulnerable because of their historically inferior earning power. Recent data show that 46.5% of SCC students have significant financial needs and receive need-based financial aid. Even more, 59.6% of gender nontraditional students receive some form of financial assistance. In addition to financial resources, many students need financial aid counseling that helps them reach their educational goals without acquiring more debt and creating more obstacles for success.

# SCC-Lincoln's GN Activities



College and Careers Conference – A planned event to demonstrate to high school students the vast array of options open to them, particularly in gender nontraditional fields.



Educational Assistance Grants and Financial Aid Counseling – One of the many ways SCC helps to overcome the barriers associated with college.

Women's Leadership Conference – SCC provides a workshop to give women the opportunity to gain insight into being successful in college and in pursuing careers in male-dominated fields after graduation.

# College and Careers Conference

- 182 high school students and 12 counselors visited SCC–Lincoln on December 7, 2005, to explore college and career opportunities. Students toured the campus, visiting each of the program areas where representatives of each program provided a summary of what students learn. A special emphasis was placed on gender nontraditional careers. A speaker highlighted the importance of solid preparation during high school and a willingness to explore careers that may be gender nontraditional.
- Panels of current SCC students brought their insight about the benefits of gender nontraditional programs and careers.
- Many students requested more information about possible career choices when the visit was over.
- While a majority of participants were juniors and seniors, it was very encouraging to see that over 20% of attendees were freshmen and sophomores.



## Outcomes:

- 5 applications that day
- 47 applications on file at year's end
- 22 requested more information
- 33 programs of interest were identified

# Conference Evaluation: What Participants Said

## **I most enjoyed...**

- The tour, seeing the program areas
- The keynote speaker
- Info about programs
- Questioning the student panel

## **Least enjoyable...**

- Introductions too long
- The panel
- Not getting to all parts of campus
- All the talking and sitting
- Going to programs I'm not interested in

## **Describe the environment of the campus...**

- Homey and nice
- Optimistic, friendly, relaxed
- Good, clean, inviting, awesome
- Very enjoyable
- The people look nice

## **What surprised you most?**

- How close everyone was
- A lot of classes
- The large size, lots of people
- All the hands-on experience
- The respect
- The age range
- The inexpensive cost

# Educational Assistance Grants

Through the Gender Nontraditional program, scholarships are provided to deserving students. A total of 30 applications were received, and 17 students were awarded scholarships for tuition and expenses for the 2005-2006 academic school year.



## Follow-up on Grantees:

- Of the 17 grant recipients, 15 (88%) had attained cumulative grade point averages of 3.0 or better.
- 13 (76%) continued to be enrolled at year's end; no one had yet graduated, and 4 had stopped out.

# Women's Leadership Conference

25 women attended the Women's Leadership Conference held on SCC-Milford Campus. The conference was open to all SCC women, attracting both students and faculty/staff.

Held May 12, the day-long conference featured Bonnie Coffey (from the Commission for the Status of Women) as the keynote speaker. Coffey talked about the challenges faced by women and how to overcome barriers in a "man's world."



The participants also received tips on how to improve their resumes, etiquette skills to win over employers, negotiating tactics to fight for equitable pay, and many other useful life-skills that all women, and especially those in gender nontraditional careers, need to be successful. 100% of those responding to the evaluation indicated the conference was excellent and they would recommend it others.

# Women's Leadership Conference Evaluation

A follow-up survey was conducted to gauge the effectiveness of the scheduled event. 19 of 25 participants responded. Possible responses were Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor

1. How would you describe your conference experience?  
100% - excellent
2. How would you rate the presenters? 100% - excellent
3. Was the Executive Dining Manners Presentation applicable? 79% Excellent, 16% Good, 5% Fair
4. Was the StrengthsQuest survey and presentation helpful? 79% Excellent, 21% Good

# By the Numbers-GN Enrollment at SCC (all campuses)

- 414 gender nontraditional students attended SCC in 2005-06
- 196 (47%) were male; 218 (53%) female
- 365 (88%) were White, non-Hispanic
- 148 (35.7%) were eligible for Pell grants
- 214 (51.6%) had taken remedial classes
- 35 (8.4%) were single parents
- 13 (3.1%) had disabilities

# By the Numbers-GN Graduates

- 123 (29.7%) of enrollees graduated
- 69 (56%) female; 54 (44%) male
- 115 (93.4%) were white, non-Hispanic
- 74 (59%) qualified for Pell grants
- 95 (77%) had taken remedial classes
- 8 (6.5%) were single parents
- 2 (1.6%) had disabilities

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The End!

